

**CHATHAM CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
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**Sunday Worship Service** 9:15 AM  
**Bible School** 10:45 AM

*Touchstone*, a journal of mere Christianity published by conservative Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christians, recently had an editorial that seems to indicate the Reformation we've been studying on Sunday nights is an on-going process.

"December 18, 2023, will go down in history as the date on which the die was cast: the date on which the church renounced the gospel's right to call us to repentance; the date that, more than any other, signals the church's implosion in the West.

"Of course, long before this fateful date on which Pope Francis signaled his approval of the 'Blessing of same-sex couples', indications abounded that not all was well... It is hard to imagine anyone doing more damage more effectively to the Catholic Church and to Christianity as a whole than Pope Francis has done with this declaration.

"Of course, every attempt will be made to explain that *Fiducia Supplicans* merely offers a blessing to people in need of God's love and mercy... This so-called "pastoral" declaration utterly fails such people, for it refuses to hold out to them the way of love and truth, which is the age-old, ascetical path that we take by saying no to our sinful desires.

"The Church of England sanctioned blessings of same-sex couples only weeks before the pope took the same leap... We cannot overstate the significance of the near-simultaneous breakdown of the Catholic and Anglican communions, for it means that the two key Western institutions that have nurtured Christian civilization since the time of the Reformation will do so no more... When we tie Christian identity to the anchor of prevailing cultural mores, what we end up with is flotsam of planks and poles, which tell the tale of a great ship that once sailed choppy cultural waters and didn't manage to stay afloat.

"Only one thing can prevent this date from going into history as one of the most tragic dates in the church's history: it is the conscious and deliberate reconnection of the pastoral and the theological. This means revoking...and prohibiting the blessing of same-sex couples, while unambiguously insisting on the pastoral counsel that same-sex activity is sinful and, as such, requires repentance." God Bless, Rick



## THE CHATHAM MESSENGER

VOLUME 52

April 1, 2024

NUMBER 4

### DON'T APPROACH THE SUN UNPROTECTED

A communion meditation by Casey Blakley  
(And a timely reminder while viewing the eclipse!)

Have you ever read the book of Leviticus and wondered just what exactly you were reading? On Sunday nights, the high school students have been looking at the first several books of the Bible and trying to extract the major themes contained within. Upon getting to Leviticus, I warned the students that we were entering an incredibly difficult section of Scripture that many people find boring and confusing. Passages like "Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material." And "the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you" leave you scratching your head. Why exactly does God care about fabric made from 2 types of material? And why is my delicious smoked pork shoulder recipe out right banned by God in this text? No doubt, in today's context, these passages are incredibly difficult to understand.

However, when you look at Leviticus a bit further zoomed out, what you find is a book focused on holiness. You see, God is holy, and he is deeply concerned with our holiness. There is an extremely good reason for this. God, being the creator of the universe is singularly powerful in a way that sets him apart from creation. In fact, that is the definition of holiness, to be set apart or unique. Now God's holiness is amazing and good, it brings life to the universe. But it is also powerful and dangerous; in fact, approaching God's presence in an unholy state is an instant death sentence. In our class we used the sun as a crude way to describe God's holiness. The sun is uniquely the source of all the energy in our solar system and thus essential to life – it's good. But Its power is such that if you were to approach the sun unprotected, it is instantly fatal. This is how it is with holiness. The unholy is destroyed in God's presence. And the various and strange (at least to us) laws found in Leviticus are how God tells the Israelites to purify themselves just so they can survive being near the presence of God. The book, however, leaves a lot to be desired as the holy of holies, (the epicenter of God's presence) can only be entered once a year, and only by the high priest on behalf of the Israelites. On the day of atonement, as described in Leviticus, the high priest would take 2 goats, one he would kill and use its blood to cover over the impurity or unholiness of Israel. The priest would then confess sins while touching the 2<sup>nd</sup> goat, placing those sins upon it. It would then be cast out away from the Israelites, symbolically removing the sins from their presence. Only then could the priest pass through the veil and enter the holy of holies into the presence of God.

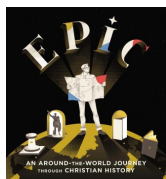
Fast forward several thousand years and we see these pictures fulfilled at the cross, where we see Jesus, the son of God, shedding his blood to cover over our impurity and unholiness. And in John 1:29 we read, "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Jesus literally becomes the atoning sacrifice and the scapegoat pictured in Leviticus. The results of which bring a sanctification among his believers that allows true holiness to be obtained. So much so that now the presence of God can literally inhabit us. Yes, we become God's temple.

STATISTICS		
	3/3	
Worship		94
Offering		\$11,241.00
	3/10	
Worship		114
Offering		\$9,558.40
	3/17	
Worship		114
Offering		\$3,499.22
	3/24	
Worship		120
Offering		\$4,493.22
	3/31	
Worship		132
Offering		\$5,342.74

## REVELATION ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

Rick began our current Sunday morning study of the book of Revelation by covering the first chapter, and Mark will take us through the letters to the seven churches found in chapters 2 and 3 over the next seven weeks.

The book of Revelation is as relevant for today as it was for the churches of the first century, and when the veil of apocalyptic literature is removed, all believers find the hope and encouragement needed for daily living.



Our Epic Around-the-World Journey Through Christian History will end on May 5th. Please feel free to join us on Sunday nights at 6:30 as we visit Australia, Africa, China and several other continents to see how the gospel was spread throughout the world.

### Communion Meditation Continued

No longer does God reside in the holy of holies, but he resides in us, his church. This is the significance of Matthew 27:51 which reads, "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split." So, as we approach this table today. We do so in full confidence that God's holiness does not destroy us. We know that God lives in us because of Christ's sacrifice, and we remember his body and blood that makes that possible. We are a holy people, not by rituals or sacrifices of goats, but by the blood of Christ. Let's celebrate that today at this table.



It's time to put together a new mowing schedule for the church lawn, and anyone interested in riding our Kubota should give Casey Blakley a call.



We have three bridal showers scheduled for this spring, so mark your calendars now. They will all take place in the fellowship hall at 2:00.

Nicole Weaver April 21  
Kate Sperry May 4  
Grace Hunley June 2

### ASIAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

Copies of the recent newsletter from Asian Christian Mission are on the sermon table, and you are encouraged to pick up a copy. Lucy, the daughter of Jesse Yangmi, has written a beautiful tribute to Ati, Jesse's widow. She recognizes all the work Ati does on the mission field, and how she has faithfully continued the mission of ACM that Jesse started, and we have supported for nearly 50 years.



Alison Boatright was baptized here at the church on this beautiful Monday morning after Easter. Please join us in celebrating her decision to give her life to Christ and let the Light of the World shine through her as Lord and Savior.



Thank you Rhonda Luzio for being a wonderful Nursery Coordinator over the past few years! We appreciate all you do!

Moving forward, Nicole Moore has agreed to take on this responsibility which is an important ministry within our church. If you would like to serve in this area, feel free to let Nicole know and she will be sure to get you involved.



### Easter Egg Hunt

One thing is for sure, every child was guaranteed to find some Easter eggs, and that they did. In fact, as you see, they needed boxes and good sized baskets to hold them all!

Thank you to Corey and Nicole for helping organize and stuff all the eggs. It was a real enjoyable morning for all who attended and we'll plan on doing it again next year!



### High School Students

Just a reminder that information sheets are available in the High School room and on the table in the auditorium for our summer MOVE conference to Warrensburg, Missouri. The theme, cost, how to register, etc., are all laid out in one place for your consideration. If you want to take advantage of the price listed, we need to register by May 1st.

Also, we are excited that Zach and Grace will be going with us again this year! Although this is a very busy month in their lives, MOVE is such a powerful week that they wanted to make it a priority within their schedule to minister to the students at this conference. We are grateful for their hearts to serve others and look forward to having them along!



Many hands make light work! I must have heard that a thousand times from my mom growing up. And, she was absolutely right.

Some projects are just too big for a few people and one of those is getting LSCA ready for the upcoming camping season. If you have a couple hours to spare on Saturday, April 20th or Saturday, May 11th beginning at 8:30am, your help would be greatly appreciated.